agricultural season the Vaddars accept other work also for extra wages.

The Erkalas earn their livelihood through a variety of means. The menfolk are hunters. They are also adept in the use of snares and traps. They train hunting dogs and use them effectively for chasing and tracking wounded animals. When they succeed in getting some game, they retain a part of it for their domestic consumption and sell the rest to the villagers. The women beg in the countryside by singing songs and narrating legends. They also do some fortune-telling. Family earnings are supplemented by basket-making, a task at which both men and women work. They also rear pigs.

THE MADIGAS

The Madigas are the lowest caste in Shamirpet. Economically they constitute the poorest section of the community. While the Malas, who are also untouchables but a degree higher than the Madigas, either cultivate their own land or work as farm labourers for daily wages, the Madigas affiliate themselves to the households of the substantial agriculturists in the village. According to the size of the land-holding of the cultivator, one or more Madiga families permanently attach themselves to him. At every stage of agricultural operations during the year the attached Madiga, and his wife and children, work in the fields of their master. They are not paid any daily wages. After the crops are harvested they have to go and 'beg' in the master's fields or threshing grounds. The conventions of the community have prescribed the rates of payment, mostly on the basis of the area of land under cultivation and the yield during the particular harvest. Thus for a certain area a basic minimum must be given; but if on account of good crops the yield has been high it is expected that the affiliated Madiga family would be given a proportionately larger share. In former times there used to be considerable compulsion, and, being in no position to protest, the Madigas had to slave for their masters, who could be quite ruthless. If the master was kind and considerate, they regarded it as their good luck. On the whole it was advisable for them to tolerate even a bad master, for any protests or refusal to do the allotted work on their part would eventually have meant their being forced to leave the village. Now, of course, conditions have changed, and Madigas do not any longer put up with indig-